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C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 000228

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DEPARTMENT FOR AF/SPG AND AF/SE  
NSC FOR PITTMAN AND SHORTLEY  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)  
SUBJECT: DARFUR APPOINTMENTS: A HOLLOW GESTURE

REF: KHARTOUM 00170

Classified By: P/E Chief E. Whitaker, Reason: Sections 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In a February 12 meeting with poloffs, Ibrahim Madibbo -- a signatory to the Declaration of Commitment (DoC) and Rizeigat leader -- admitted that the January 4 announcement of his appointment as chairman of the Darfur Resettlement and Rehabilitation Commission was unexpected (reftel). Madibbo learned of the appointment on television, and he has had no further communication from the Sudanese government since the announcement. He was "pessimistic" that the government would empower the Transitional Darfur Regional Authority as envisioned under the Darfur Peace Agreement (DPA). He has not been given an office or other logistical support for the commission, and the Government has not identified an official interlocutor for the TDRA appointees. By consequence, Madibbo has not decided to accept the appointment, though he hoped to meet with Presidential Advisor Nafie Ali Nafie later in the week and would seek clarification. "Right now, I don't even know what I'm entitled to," said Madibbo.

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TDRA Progress Positive  
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¶2. (C) Despite his complaints on the Government's approach, Madibbo supported the idea of moving forward with 75 percent of the appointments stipulated in the DPA, including the governor of North Darfur and the chairman of the Compensation Commission. He indicated that the remaining 25 percent of the government positions allocated for Darfurians -- to include a minister in the Government of National Unity (GNU) -- would be sufficient to entice the DPA non-signatories to join the peace process. He also said that the Darfur-Darfur Dialogue and Consultation (DDDC) should proceed, which would contribute to stabilizing the security situation on the ground. He cautioned, however, that the DDDC needed to include traditional tribal leaders who command the respect of their constituencies, not those who have been co-opted by the Government. Madibbo believed that DDDC chairman Abdel Mohammed understood that this was the correct approach.

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Minawi, AU Must "Stand Up"  
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¶3. (C) Madibbo asked that the USG use its influence with the African Union (AU) and Senior Assistant to the President and Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) leader Minni Minawi to encourage them to be more assertive with the Sudanese government. He stressed that Minawi needed to "stand up," "bring life to his job," and use his position as the fourth

highest ranking member of the GNU to re-invigorate the peace process. When poloff reminded Madibbo that he and Minawi faced a similar lack of logistical support and access to influential members of the National Congress Party (NCP), Madibbo responded that Minawi could engage with civil society groups and prominent Darfurian leaders to mobilize support. He also said that Vice President Ali Osman Taha was open to helping Minawi advance the peace process. "The Darfur leaders in Khartoum are more important than the people in the field," said Madibbo. "If he works with them and with the DoCs, we can bring more support for him from the people in the field. Now, he doesn't talk to us." Madibbo added that Minawi's veiled threats to pull out of the DPA made him look uncommitted to peace and further contributed to the erosion in his support.

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Comment  
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14. (C) Madibbo just returned from 17 years of self-imposed exile in November 2006, and his assessment of the current Sudanese political environment may be outdated: 1) His recommendation that Taha could serve as a useful point of engagement for Minawi may be optimistic given Taha's marginalization within the NCP. 2) Though the Rizeigat are an exception, the break-down in Darfur's social fabric is due in large part to a chasm between traditional tribal leaders and their youth, which the DDDC would be hard pressed to correct in the current security environment. Nonetheless, the USG should continue to press Minawi and the AU to pursue more strategic political engagement with the Sudanese government and the Darfur public. End comment.  
HUME